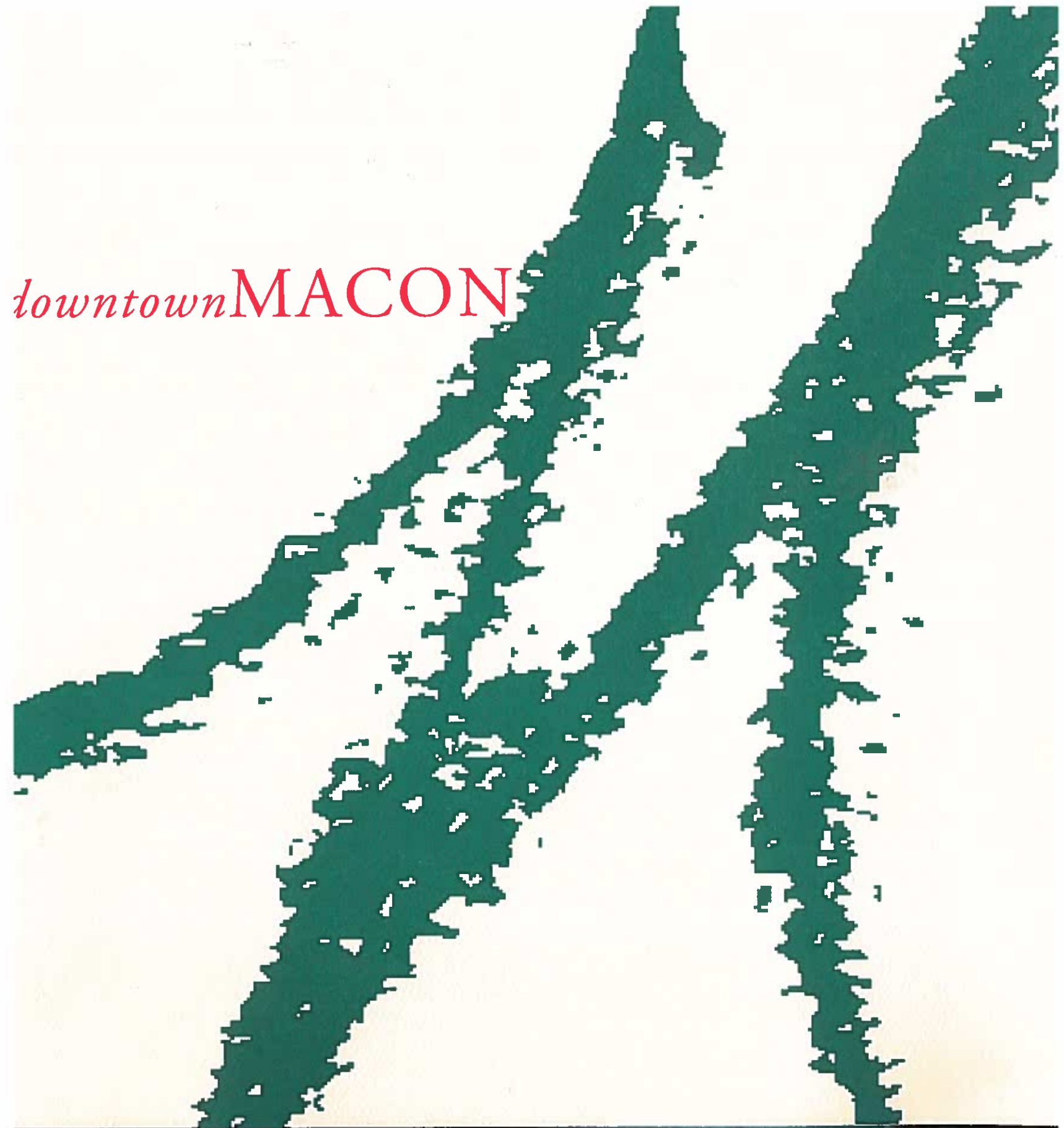
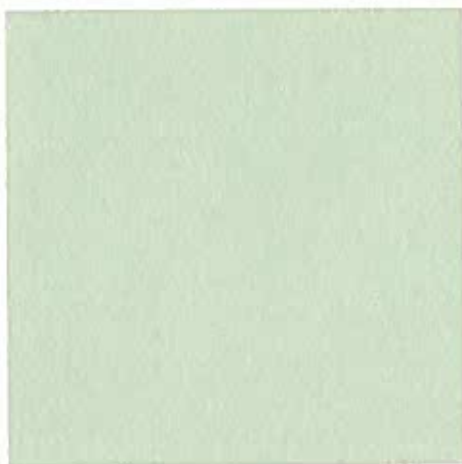
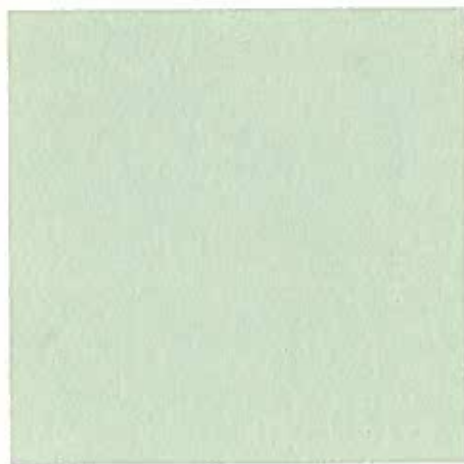
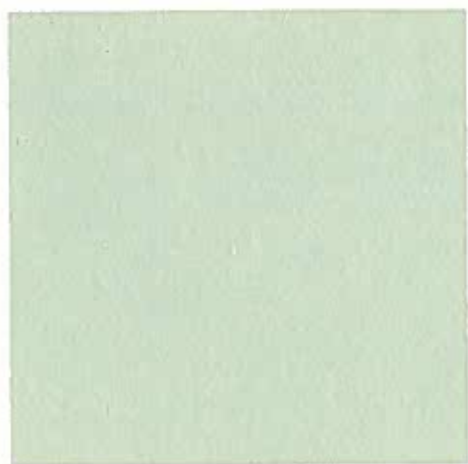


*downtown*MACON





Entering the Next Millennium

There are opportunities to seize



*Jim Marshall, Mayor,
City of Macon*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Marshall".

Consequently, the Foundation engaged an outside consultant to provide a Status Report on Downtown. From that initial process, a new public/private partnership was organized – NewTown Macon, Inc.

NewTown was created to benefit the residents of the city, county and the region by providing leadership, planning and support for the ongoing growth and development of Downtown Macon. This unique partnership is not an implementing organization; it is a planning collaborative, with a focus on action. NewTown's sole purpose is to facilitate change by marshaling leadership and providing support for projects that are important to the community.

The plan presented in this brochure is one of the first major products of NewTown

and challenges to address.



*Larry Justice, Chairman,
Bibb County Board of Commissioners*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Larry D. Justice".

Macon, Inc. It is an economic development strategy and urban design plan for guiding downtown development into the next millennium. The plan is not cast in stone nor does it attempt to solve all problems. The plan is flexible and provides the guidance needed to make Downtown Macon one of America's greatest city centers.

This document is designed to serve our city, county and state governments; our residents; and those from Macon and Bibb County (and beyond) who want to invest and be a part of our exciting and growing downtown area. By using it as a marketing tool, you can help bring about new investment into Downtown Macon. Feel free to share this brochure with associates and friends.

DEAR MACON AND BIBB COUNTY CITIZENS,

As we approach the 21st Century, the time has come to reflect on the proud history of this great city and county, and to think creatively about the future. We have made great progress in recent years, yet there is still much to do. There are opportunities to seize and challenges to address.

One of our most significant assets is the heart of our city and county – Downtown Macon. It is the government seat, the center of business activity and cultural resources, and a growing visitor destination. For the past several years, however, Downtown has been in transition. Approximately eighteen months ago, the Peyton Anderson Foundation recognized that development was occurring, but without sensitivity to a broader vision or plan for the future.

A VITAL CENTER for Working, Living, and Growing

Downtown Macon attracts thousands of people everyday who bring life, vitality and economic prosperity into the area. They work in Downtown's banks, professional and government offices, hospitals and clinics, restaurants, and for the small businesses that give Downtown Macon its vibrant character. People do business in Downtown; they visit their bank and insurance agent; go to the County Court House and City Hall; visit the doctor and pharmacy; and stop for lunch or dinner.



There is much for visitors to do and see in Downtown Macon. They can go to the Hay House, Georgia Music Hall of Fame or Tubman Museum on Saturday morning; shop for the afternoon; and see a show in the Grand Opera House, Douglass Theatre or Theatre Macon at night. Special events draw thousands of visitors regularly. The Cherry Blossom Festival attracts more than 400,000 people every year!



Continued growth and success downtown will require both public and private investment, as well as careful attention to the public environment. "Clean, safe and friendly" is but one of the important images that must be cultivated by the city, county and private sector downtown.

At the same time, the city and county, with support from major financial institutions, need to encourage reinvestment in new housing Downtown. Both freestanding and adaptive

*Zelma Redding,
Downtown
Business Owner*



"I love being Downtown. Macon has been my home for most of my life. I opened my business Downtown in 1942, and have been here ever since. The life on the street and the festivals – they're one of a kind!"

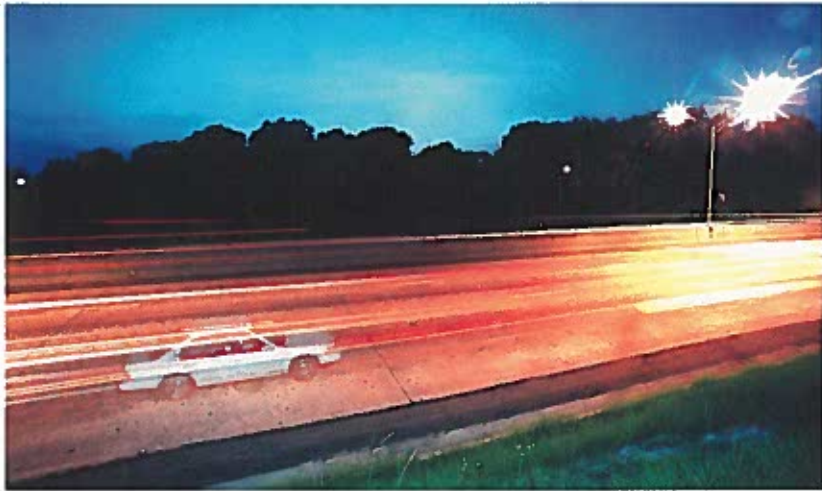


use of upper floors in existing historic buildings, along with the introduction of an interesting mix of new retail shops, restaurants and entertainment venues are vital housing components.

New Downtown housing and a new mix of retail shops and entertainment venues will create a high energy place where people, young and old, will want to go for business and pleasure during the day, in the evening and on weekends.

enhancing GATEWAYS and CORRIDORS

Most people traveling to Downtown Macon arrive by car. Visitors and many regional residents use the interstate system, while residents from the south arrive via Forsyth, First, Second and Broadway Streets.



The arrival experience is an important one. Downtown Macon's entry points should convey positive images and welcome the visitor by providing sufficient guidance to find parking, attractions and important landmarks, such as the Medical Center and Bibb County Courthouse. The goal is to make Downtown easy to find and use so people will want to return. Needless to say, today's visitor may be tomorrow's investor!

With substantial city and state resources already committed to new facilities and roadway improvements, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard will evolve as Macon's "front door." Improvements are planned for the Boulevard that will make it "pedestrian-friendly" and more attractive. The OtisRedding Bridge will be improved; an enhanced pedestrian connection across the bridge will link downtown attractions to the Macon Centreplex and future development on the former Bibb Mill site.



Enhancements that build on the strength and potential of Cherry, Mulberry and Poplar Streets are proposed as part of a series of public investments intended to stimulate downtown economic development.

A vibrant, stylized illustration of a park or fairground scene. In the foreground, a wide red path leads from the bottom center towards a blue road. On the road, a yellow car is parked on the left, and a white car is driving towards the right. To the right of the road, a small figure of a person is walking. In the background, a bridge with a colorful, multi-arched structure spans across the scene. Behind the bridge, there are several tall, green, conical trees. The sky is blue with white clouds. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century graphic design or children's book illustrations.



*David Lucas,
Representative,
State of Georgia*

"We must focus our energy. When you consider how important our historic town centers are to our identity as a state, you realize that it makes simple sense to make them a first priority. So far, we're pleased with the level of commitment shown to our Downtown at all levels of government. However, we need to maintain the momentum that has been injected into our community with the Georgia Music Hall of Fame and the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. The location of these assets is strategic to their success."

downtown DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

When Macon was originally planned in 1822, designer James Webb envisioned a "City in a Park," with a rectangular street grid and unusually wide streets that were "named for the trees of the forest through which they were laid." This 175-year-old plan still governs the orderly layout of buildings on Macon's streets. Poplar, Mulberry and Third Streets – Macon's classic urban boulevards – continue to reinforce the character and image of Downtown.

Although Downtown Macon is historic, it is not a static entity. It continually evolves, as new buildings are constructed to house businesses and residents. The past decade has witnessed the evolution of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard as a civic address of statewide significance with the Peyton Anderson Community Services Center, the renovated Douglass Theatre and the new Georgia Music Hall of Fame. Additional investment in the area is anticipated with an expansion of the Tubman Museum and the forthcoming Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. Furthermore, new businesses are occupying once-vacant storefronts and institutions are rehabilitating buildings for downtown office space.

As Macon moves into the 21st Century, Downtown will offer a unique alternative for businesses otherwise considering Macon's outlying areas. Opportunities are plentiful for new office sites, healthcare and medical-related services, specialty and discount/outlet retail, entertainment and arts venues, and adjunct operations that capitalize on these downtown activities, especially restaurants and support services.

Building on Downtown Uses

New development should respect the established patterns that make Downtown Macon

"I decided to dig in and stay downtown. If we expand again, we'll expand right where we are – Downtown. There are plenty of opportunities to be part of the Downtown renaissance. As a businessman, I had to ask myself, 'Is it worth it? Does it make sound business sense?' After many years of being here, you'll see me smile when I say, 'I wouldn't have it any other way.'"

Riverwalk

Riverfront Park

Riverfront Development Site

Infill Opportunities

Coleman Hill Park Improvements

Cherry Street Enhancements

Residential Infill

Future Italian Restaurant



Chamber of Commerce has long focused on attracting companies and new investment to Macon. To those seeking to invest here, Downtown sets the tone for the region. Increasingly, companies weigh locational decisions on a community's ability to provide a high quality of life for its employees. Downtown Macon offers residents the cultural and entertainment amenities that companies hold in high regard."



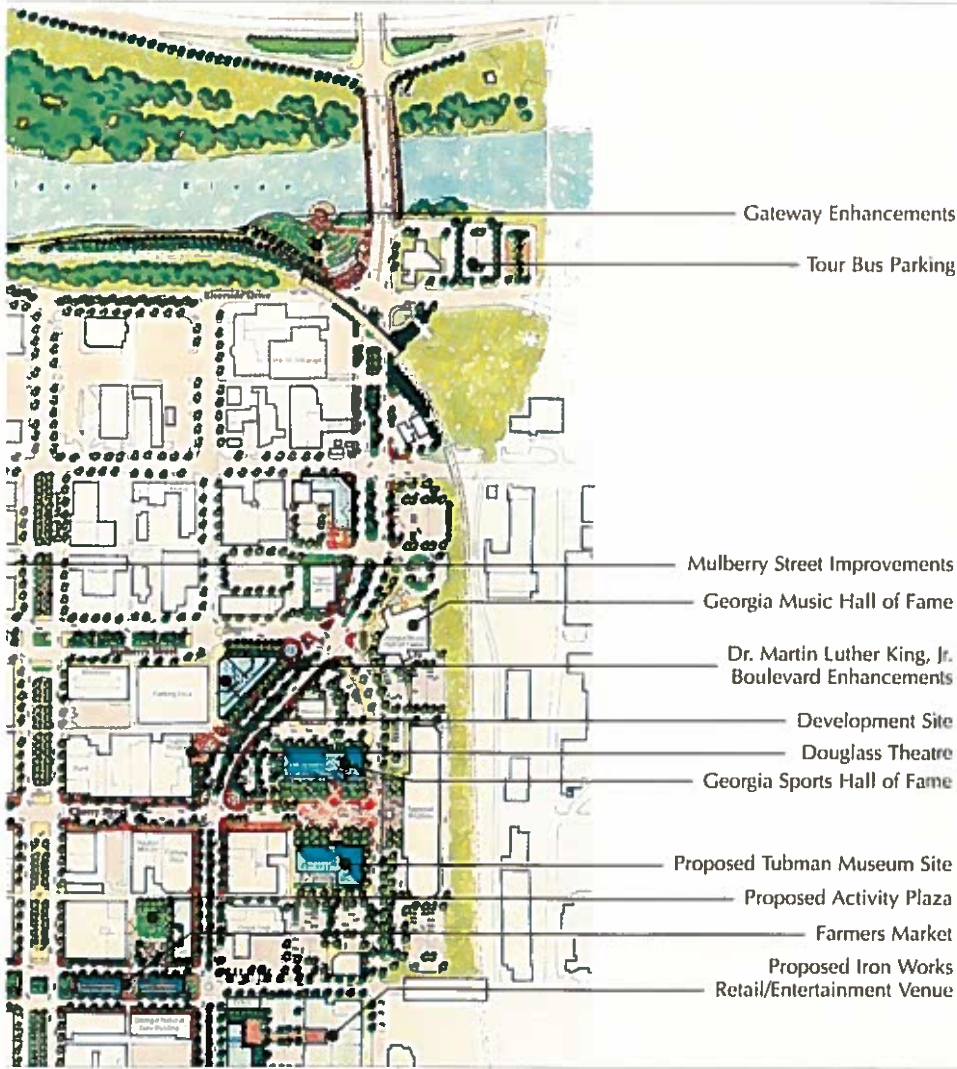
Albert Billingslea,
Downtown Businessman



Paul Nagle,
President, Greater Macon
Chamber of Commerce

a special place. Its street patterns, mix of uses and geography have evolved with a particularly comfortable human scale and a certain architectural character that evokes a sense of history. While Downtown Macon contains a true mixture of uses – government, institutional, commercial, office, and residential – certain streets have a clear emphasis.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard should be reinforced as the center of Macon's visitor-related activities. Additional attractions, restaurants and limited retail are ideal uses along this high-profile corridor.



Cherry Street is Downtown Macon's retail street. Cherry Street's pivotal location, wide sidewalks and ample on-street parking make it ideal for Downtown retailers. Retail stores and small-scale businesses should be encouraged to concentrate on Cherry Street and on north-south streets to either side, Cotton Avenue, Second Street and Third Street.

Mulberry Street is Macon's office and institutional address. The Bibb County Courthouse and Federal Courthouse serve as landmarks on this key Downtown boulevard. Several infill development opportunities exist along the street.

Major entrance corridors provide opportunities for auto-related commercial uses. New development should have a well landscaped and attractive image to passersby.

The Medical Center is a magnet for medical related offices and services. These uses should strive toward a greater presence on First Street, an important entrance route into Downtown.

The Fall Line. The natural break created by the fall line offers dramatic views of Downtown and the surrounding countryside. New residential development at this location could take advantage of views and its proximity to employment opportunities.

the OCMULGEE RIVER

A Rediscovered Treasure

Ocmulgee means "boiling water" in the language of the ancient Hitchiti, one of several nomadic tribes linked to the Macon Plateau. Archeological evidence suggests that the first American Indian tribes camped on the banks of the Ocmulgee River about 10,000 years ago. Since then, the Ocmulgee has passed through many cycles of use: a source of irrigation for the crops of ancient tribes; a navigable waterway for early industry; and most recently, an untapped recreational amenity and development opportunity.

For years, the downtown portion of the Ocmulgee River has been written off as a lost opportunity. However, visions of its development potential are gaining momentum in the community. In the Town Hall meetings, held as part of the Downtown planning process, citizens reinforced their desire to create new opportunities to walk, jog and ride along the river's edge.

In the past, two obstacles have prevented the full use of the Ocmulgee River:

The river floods, making any improvements within the floodway costly and potentially unstable. This stands to be rectified as the Army Corps of Engineers is studying the issue and will be recommending remedial improvements.

Access to the Ocmulgee is cut off by an active rail line, giving Macon's riverfront an industrial image. While often seen as an insurmountable obstacle, many cities have found creative ways to capitalize on their riverfronts, regardless of rail lines.



Virgil Adams,
Attorney

"The Ocmulgee River is an incredible asset to Downtown. As we seek ways to enhance the use of this resource, I think the river's value will become more obvious."

Public Places to Enjoy the River

A number of recreational and economic development opportunities exist on Macon's Ocmulgee riverfront. These include opportunities for the construction of a one-mile long raised riverwalk anchored by public open spaces adjacent to the Otis Redding Bridge and at the end of First Street. A mini park adjacent to the Otis Redding Bridge could "anchor" the riverwalk and be designed as a Downtown gateway. A site at the end of First



Charles H. Jones,
President,
e Fields, Inc.



"Since prehistoric times, the Ocmulgee River has given our community a strong identity. The river is a regional resource – one that, until recently, has gone largely untapped. Exciting new initiatives are placing renewed emphasis on the recreational potential of the Ocmulgee. Residents and visitors will benefit from a greatly enhanced Ocmulgee riverfront."

near the Crowne Plaza Hotel, could be a key linkage to the riverwalk and accommodate a new restaurant, offices and/or other commercial

' Connections

Ocmulgee Greenway project is an ambitious initiative that seeks to capture and develop several thousand acres of land in the area for public use. This initiative is

moving ahead as a result of the combined efforts of the State of Georgia, City of Macon, Bibb County, and the Trust for Public Land.

Approximately six and one half miles of Greenway trails that will link the Macon Water Authority with Central City Park and the Ocmulgee National Monument is being coordinated by the Path Foundation, the Community Foundation and the Trust for Public Lands.

This trail system will be coordinated with Newtown's effort to revitalize Riverside Drive between Spring Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Several large, private holdings are being pursued as part of a continuous public open space along the Ocmulgee River corridor that stretches from Juliette to Warner Robins. Downtown Macon will provide the perfect launching point for a day's activities along this larger network of parks and trails.

Public Initiatives Will Spur Private Investment

Public investment in the riverfront will resound through Macon's development community and generate renewed interest in Riverside Drive. In the future, Riverside Drive could evolve as a significant business address, with high visibility from the Interstate and dynamic views of the Ocmulgee River. While intended as a long-term vision, consolidating land in this area is the first step toward attracting a major new user to Downtown Macon.

An effort has begun to purchase property adjacent to Riverside Drive for the purpose of preparing the site for quality mixed-use development and offering public access to the river.



POPLAR STREET

Back to its Former Glory

*Willie C. Hill,
President,
Macon City Council*



"We need to be focused and agree that Poplar Street is worth our energy. While solutions may be complex and will take time, we need to make the long-term commitment to the area and set the wheels of regeneration in motion."

Poplar Street is on the cusp of a renaissance. Once a bustling urban boulevard featuring a farmers market, the three-block segment between Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and City Hall has experienced steady decline. Fortunately, investment and other signs of positive change are emerging.



Historically, the Poplar Street median was home to a public market where farmers and artisans could sell their goods directly to the public. Macon could bring back its market and establish an important anchor for Poplar Street. Critical to the success of this scheme is maintaining public parking on the market site during non-selling hours.

While many old buildings are gone, the historic character of Poplar Street remains. "Missing teeth" along Poplar Street should be infused with new development that is sympa-

"Investing downtown makes simple economic sense. The abundance of opportunities, from small renovations to multi-acre developments, offers the potential for small businesses to start up and major companies to locate in the most unique environment Macon has to offer. The future is bullish for developers willing to make the investment."



*Marco Danese,
President, General
Industrial Polymers*



present uses of Macon's Poplar Street. They studied historic archives, watched people on the street, and enlisted the community to help shape their ideas. A panel of top urban design experts and community leaders selected a winning proposal among plans presented by three leading architects.

Poplar Street: Macon Yard

Architect Walter Hood, winner of the national competition, envisions a series of yards along the slope extending from the First Baptist Church to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard below. His concept of the Yard is multi-dimensional: its aesthetics represent a simple marking of past spaces; its uses are designed to accommodate and celebrate everyday patterns of life. People, cars, buses, small pavilions, gardens, water, and the street's past history combine to create a medley of activities and events along Macon Yard. A walk through the Yard will reveal Macon's past, present and future.

thetic to the historic context of the area. Private initiatives must be supported by public investment in Poplar Street's infrastructure. The goal of any public investment is to stimulate private economic development and raise property values – a beneficial situation for everyone involved.

In February 1998, Macon hosted the National Institute of Design for Mayors, with Poplar Street serving as the focal point for ideas. Leading architects from all over the United States studied and celebrated the past and

The physical and social patterns from the street's history will be illuminated and extended through new design proposals that accommodate current and future activities. These include: alleyway improvement and infill opportunities; a restored creek area; outdoor projection screen and Wall of Fame; park and gardens; gateways; historical and contemporary lighting features; improved transit zones; and small and large shade trees.

The city is now working with the Department of Transportation to prepare the plan for implementation.

capturing the TOURISM ADVANTAGE

*Janice W. Marshall,
Executive Director,
Macon-Bibb County
Convention and
Visitors Bureau*



"Fortunately for Downtown Macon, visitor attractions are clustered amidst beautiful historic architecture, creating an area where visitors as well as residents enjoy shopping, dining and other opportunities. It's alive with activity, and will become even more so as additional attractions come on line."

Tourism in Macon holds great promise. Many significant investments have already taken place: the Macon Centreplex, Georgia Music Hall of Fame, Douglass Theatre, the planned Georgia Sports Hall of Fame, and the expansion of the Harriet Tubman African American Museum. The benefits of tourism are substantial. Not only can it contribute jobs and income to a local economy, but tourism also provides a means for potential investors or residents to preview a community. Most importantly, visitors supplement the market for activities, facilities and venues that can enrich the lives of Macon residents.

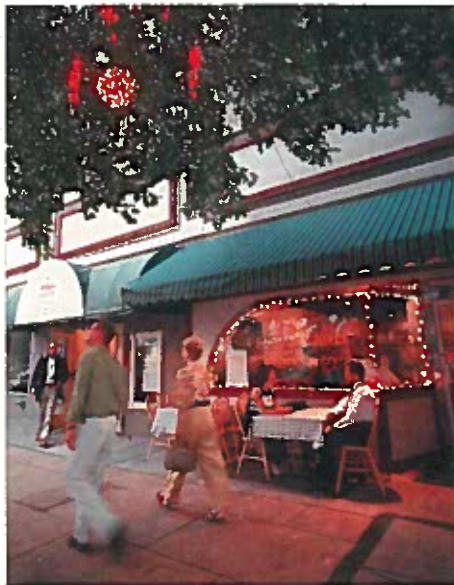
A coordinated effort is necessary for tourism to grow in the Macon area. It is an increasingly competitive industry, and there is no single activity, attraction or marketing scheme that will create instant success. However, Macon already has an advantage with its relatively balanced

tourist season, making it easier to develop than a destination with sharp variations between high and low seasons.

The following initial recommendations address tourism in Macon:

New facilities. Develop additional tourism venues and support services to enhance existing downtown attractions.

Improve access. Some of Macon's attractions are clustered Downtown, others are not as geographically compact, making it relatively difficult for visitors to move among various venues. Public transportation and wayfinding signage should be implemented. An introductory video or show about Macon should be created to enhance the first-time visitor's understanding of how Macon's attractions are related and how to get from one to another.



Strengthen marketing. The Macon-Bibb County Convention and Visitors Bureau should seek additional support for marketing tourism and develop an enhanced marketing plan. Emphasis should be placed on the Atlanta market for overnight visits and investing more money in marketing to individual and independent leisure travelers.

Focus responsibility. Macon's tourism organizations and agencies should be better coordinated. An organizational study of tourism-related bodies should be undertaken to clarify current roles; identify areas for improvement; and define responsibilities for developing, managing and marketing the tourism product in Macon.

Develop a Strategic Plan for Tourism.

Tourism is a form of local economic development – the issues are complex, interrelated and often involve public funds. A plan should guide important future decisions.

Macon is poised to capitalize on a growing sector of the regional and world economy. Action must be taken now to ensure that Macon emerges as a leader in tourism as it enters the next millennium.

important NEXT STEPS . . . Implementation & Action Strategy

Implementing the initiatives identified by NewTown Macon will require public and private coordination, strong leadership, commitment, and funding.

Current Priorities

The NewTown Macon Board identified five areas of focus designed to achieve maximum impact on the character and vitality of Downtown. These short-term priorities will improve Downtown's image and livability by capitalizing on its historic, cultural, and natural resources.

NewTown Organizational Structure – To maximize effectiveness, the Board established task forces to implement key initiatives. Each task force is responsible for one immediate area of focus. Reporting to the Board, they will identify issues, tackle obstacles, and coordinate competing interests. The Land Use and Marketing committees have organized and are moving towards implementation.

Downtown as a Visitor Destination – Tourism represents a major growth opportunity. A marketing and tourism task force



has begun work on a number of projects, including the pedestrian plaza, the Terminal Station re-use and an ISTE A project to link the Greenway Project with Bibb Mill and Downtown. Other potential Downtown projects include creating a strategic plan for tourism and expanding the Tubman Museum.

One significant project underway, which NewTown Macon helped facilitate, is the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard streetscape improvements, which will make the street more "pedestrian-friendly" and unify its appearance from Riverside Drive to Cherry Street.

Ocmulgee Riverfront – Recommendations for a regional greenway running through Downtown along the Ocmulgee Riverfront have been put before the public. Key

parcels must be identified and acquired to ensure enhanced riverfront public access. Implementation will require cooperation among state, local, and non-profit organizations; the NewTown task force can be instrumental in bringing this about.

Downtown Housing – Creating downtown housing is critical to creating a vibrant and active downtown. As of September 1997, apartments were under construction in restored buildings in several downtown locations. Continued emphasis on housing will support NewTown's economic development objectives, as housing and economic development often go hand-in-hand in downtowns.

Moving Ahead

NewTown's focus is to create an on-going, action-oriented agenda for Downtown Macon. The initiatives outlined above are key short-term objectives, crucial to the Downtown's core environment. These initial improvements will create the foundation for additional economic development and opportunities for long-term growth and revitalization of Downtown Macon.



NEWTOWN MACON, INC.

Mission Statement



Jacquelyn Decell,
Director,
NewTown Macon,
Inc.

"NewTown Macon, Inc. is an action-oriented group with a diverse membership from Macon's political, corporate and institutional leadership. We have challenged ourselves with coordinating the diverse interests involved in downtown development. I personally look forward to achieving our ambitious mission and encourage every Maconite to participate in building our city's future."

NewTown Macon, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to the vital and effective development of Downtown Macon, capturing the community's imagination, achieving a compelling community consensus, and coordinating the community's comprehensive plan for enriching the downtown area.

For more information or if you would like to be part of this effort, please contact:

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Goals

- 1 To regain the historic, cultural, educational, governmental, entertainment, and commercial significance of Downtown as the focal point of activity in Macon, Bibb County and the Macon marketplace.
- 2 To involve interested citizens and stakeholders in conceiving and participating in claiming the best future for Downtown Macon.
- 3 To serve as an advocate for positive and productive change in Downtown, supporting the community and its investors in implementing new initiatives and undertaking new enterprises.
- 4 To foster the development of an economic strategy for Downtown Macon which will create a model-city environment.
- 5 To work with existing authorities, commissions, departments, governments, and organizations who participate in planning for Downtown and to facilitate a better coordination of their efforts.
- 6 To build consensus, develop broad understanding for projected plans and opportunities, and encourage action that will contribute to the economic growth, the historical and cultural stability, and the positive image of Downtown.
- 7 To listen, respond, and represent the larger public interest, cultivating private and individual interests that contribute to the broader and more comprehensive good of Downtown.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The NewTown Macon Board, Macon City Council and Bibb County Board of Commissioners have worked diligently to bring positive change to Downtown Macon.

The NewTown Downtown initiative was made possible with the hard work of the many concerned citizens who contributed their valuable insights and local knowledge to the planning process.

A Special Thanks to Those Who Attended Town Hall Meetings

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Hank Alinger	Carol Hudler
Sid Cherry	Juanita Jordan
Jacquelyn Decell	Rick Pariani
Gene Dunwody, Sr.	Ken Sheets
Van Ethridge	James Tonn
Bob Fountain	Don Tussing
Kirby Godsey	Bert Winterbottom

The NewTown Macon Board

Jacquelyn S. Decell, Executive Director

Executive Committee

Kirby Godsey, President & Chairman
John Frank, Vice Chairman
Robert Hatcher, Treasurer
Virgil Adams
Carol Hudler
Juanita Jordan
Charles Jones
John McSween
Jo Wilbanks

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David DeShaw
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Damon King
David Lucas, Representative, State of Georgia
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John Mc Donald
Don McGouirk
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Consultant Team

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